

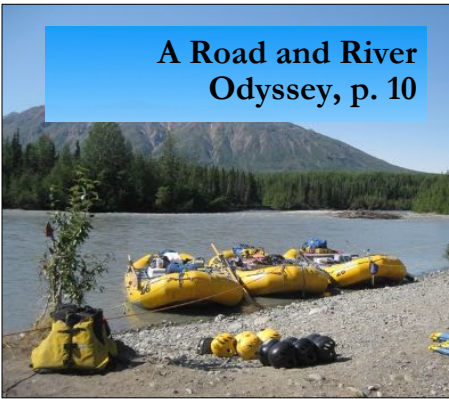


Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News

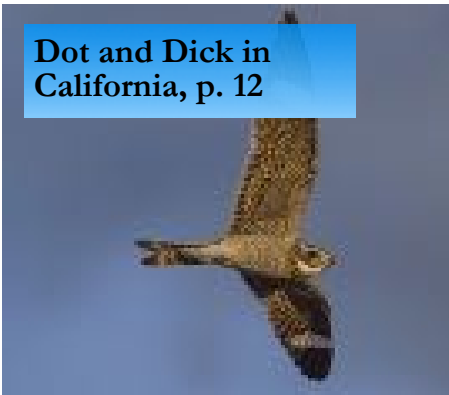
May 2020

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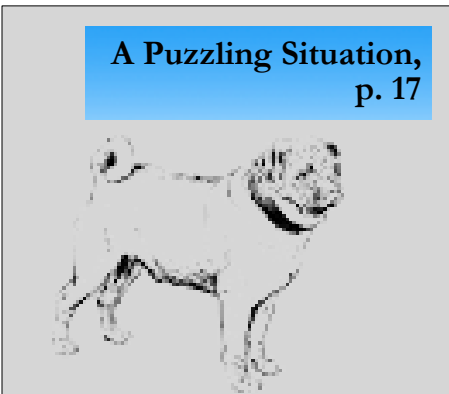
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A View from the US Helm

By Robin Marshall
TARSUS Coordinator
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Ahoy to all TARSUS members. I am sure like myself you are staying in and reading and doing various projects around your home.

Because of this pandemic and the restrictions there is not much to report. I have received the last few renewals so we are up to strength again.

Some members have decided to sign up for the upcoming book from Ama-

zon Publications: *Sunlight and Shadows* (the flier was in your last Signals). The cost to TARSUS members is \$25.

Send a check with your request to me, made out to the Arthur Ransome Society. I will pass it on to Alan Hakim.

I wonder if any of you are flying the plague flag? There are some comments about this on the Arthur Ransome Group (www.facebook.com/groups/2612950856/) on Facebook, which is a good way to stay in touch with like minds. They do some quizzes that might give you something to do if you are staying at home.

Please welcome our new member Timothy Lewis, I am assured he is not an armadillo but a real person. Welcome aboard Timothy!

Hoping everyone is staying well. Stay safe for as long as it takes.
Robin



Greetings from the North

By Ian Sacré, TARS Canada Coordinator
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Greetings Canadian TARS Members.

Once again it is time to write the Spring newsletter and again I find myself searching for things to convey to

members. Firstly I would like to thank all Canadian TARS for paying their 2020 membership renewals in a timely fashion. Well done! When I hear about the delays some regions experience in reporting a full slate of payed-up members we are certainly not a tardy group! Sadly for a variety of reasons three Canadian members have decided not to renew their memberships this year and have resigned from the the Society. They will be missed. At the same time we have not been able to recruit any new members either so the size of the Society continues to dwindle.

It will be recalled that TARS HQ advised us last year that any overseas member who was interested in receiving an on-line version only of *Signals* and *Mixed Moss* could save £5 (roughly \$8) on the cost of an overseas subscription. It appears this offer was of little interest to Canadian members as I have not heard from anyone wishing to move to an electronic medium.

The current worldwide contagion is causing a great deal of hardship to many among us, both near and far, and one wonders what the world will look like when it is all over. Thankfully

people are finding ways to adapt in the most surprising ways. One of my daughters, for instance, was always a self-proclaimed hopeless cook despite the fact she and my son-in-law are raising three of my grandchildren. Almost overnight she has become an accomplished baker, turning out exotic breads, cinnamon buns, cookies and heaven knows what else.

I am lucky in that the streets in my neighbourhood are wide and almost devoid of people on the move. I seldom pass more than two or three in a five-kilometre walk. The other day I passed a house where the children had laid out the driveway in a huge chalked Snakes and Ladders game board and the family were the pieces moving up and down the board. I was impressed with their imaginative way to get fresh air and exercise.

One of my personal pleasures in recent days has been the re-reading of Arthur Ransome's *Secret Water*, and

then looking for and finding the geographical location in England where he placed the yarn. It will be remembered that the Wizard's rudder pintle had been bent when the dinghy ran aground on the pilings, so the Walker family decided to cross the Red Sea over the Wade at low water to find a boat builder to repair the rudder.

On arriving on the mainland after a muddy crossing, the boat builder was found and the shopping completed. Titty, Roger, Bridget and Sinbad the cat were then instructed to get back to Swallow Island while the tide was still low. But the party under the able seamen decided to do a bit more surveying, left it too late and were stranded on the Wade with the rising tide, only to be rescued by the good old Mastodon.

I was curious to learn more of the location and after some good old Googling found Hamford Water National Nature Reserve in Essex where the story takes place. Swallow Island is actually Horsey Island and the town is Walton-on-the-Naze. The Red Sea is in fact called The Twizzle. High tides in the area can rise over 5 metres. Members may find the two pictures of the 'Red Sea' crossing of the Wade of interest. I think my bucket list has just got longer!

I wish everyone fair winds and calm seas and sincerely hope those near and dear to us stay plague free.

Ian Sacré



The Wade at low and high water

Hamford Water





A Note from the Editor

By Simon Horn, sjhorn@gmail.com

Welcome to *Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News* for May 2020.

Thanks to you all for your contributions. This time we are lucky to have articles both from our regulars as well as from two new writers, who are greatly appreciated.

In this issue

In *Dipping our Hands*, **Maida Follini**'s "Pirates, Explorers, Indians, and other Imaginary Roles" talks about the way children's games, in literature and in reality, reflect the cultures they grow up in, and then goes on to discuss the role played by both make-believe and outdoor activities in her own childhood.

In "My Discovery of Arthur Ransome", **Audrie Cossar** describes her discovery of both boats – in the form of her parents' 20' motor cruiser on Lake Simcoe – and Ransome – in *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea* – which, thanks to Christmases and birthdays, was quickly followed by the other 11.

Paul Nelson explains what he and Winston Churchill and Arthur Ransome have in common in "Churchill, Ransome, and Me". Something to do with boats, apparently.

In *Kanchenjunga's Cairn*, **Jill Blair**'s "A Road and River Odyssey" tells of an 11-day rafting trip on the Tatshenshini/Alsek rivers in the Yukon, part of a six-week trip north from Vancouver. (Watch for part 2 in a future issue.)

Molly McGinnis continues the saga of "Dot and Dick in California" in *Dot's Latest Story*, where Dick goes on a bird-watching and ichthyology field

trip, to witness both birds and sea creatures, and Dot, poor thing, learns to cook the fish he brings back in *Beck-foot Kitchen*. Ms. McGinnis then presents her own recipe for cole slaw, a good side dish with fish.

Once again *Pieces of Eight* is saved by the combined efforts of the talented Blue sisters. **Martha Blue** gives us "A Puzzling Situation" to solve, while **Aurora Blue** reviews Bear Gryll's adventure, *Strike of the Shark*, as well of providing various methods of signalling that we might use while social distancing.

* * *

For the last issue, an upgrade to my page layout software led me to experiment with producing the issue in a way that would allow me to present two-page spreads. The example was my *Pieces of Eight* activity "Can you connect Ransome's characters to the books?".

Although I did not receive any comments about this innovation, I have decided that, generally, it is not worth it, since it makes the PDF of the newsletter even harder to read unless you have a large-screen monitor. So with this issue I return to the single-page format I have always used.

* * *

The next issue is due in September 2020. As always, your contributions

will make the difference. And while I will send you a reminder August first, don't wait, start writing now.

As I have mentioned before, *Pieces of Eight* remains a problem, and I am not sure that relying on the ever-helpful editorial team at the *Outlaw* to fill it is a long-term solution.

I took a look at the membership list, and we are overwhelmingly, and increasingly, seniors (Canada: 15 out of 23, US: 26 out of 55). Nonetheless, we have 16 family memberships listed in Canada and the United States. (These figures are approximations, so quote me carefully.)

So, if you have children, and if they are interested, see if together you might come up with a contribution for *Pieces of Eight*.

And for the rest of you, with all of us stuck at home because of the pandemic, this might be an opportunity to write that article you have been thinking about.

Take care of yourselves,
Simon

Guidelines for Submissions

Preferred document formats:
Microsoft Word (docx), Apple Pages, RTF.

Illustrations and photos:
You can indicate in your article where you would like your illustrations to appear, but please provide them separately in jpg or png formats, since they may be difficult to extract from text.

Images should be reasonably large: I can make a big photo smaller without losing quality, but I can't make a small one big!

Dipping our Hands — Personal relationships with the books

Pirates, Explorers, Indians, and other Imaginary Roles

By Maida Barton Follini (Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Children as a species naturally tend to take on roles spun out of their imaginations and their culture. Pirates, romanticized in Robert Louis Stevenson's book, *Treasure Island*, are exciting, bold, and have glorious adventures sailing the seven seas. No wonder Nancy and Peggy took on the pirates' role. The Explorers in *Winter Holiday* were inspired by Nansen's attempt to reach the North Pole; his daring journeys over ice-covered seas appealed to the imagination. No wonder "Captain Flint's" Fram was named for Nansen's ship.

Children's games and plots reflect what they are exposed to. In North America, a standby role for urban children has always been the game of "Cops and Robbers", where one team are robbers, evading capture, and the other team the cops, trying to arrest them. This mirrors the city streets, where bank robbers, car thieves, and house-breakers are featured in the front pages of the news, and the cop on the beat appeared as a uniformed



Ram Island, Penobscot Bay, Maine, c. 1935

hero (or enemy!) outwitting crime.

In more rural areas, the roles commonly taken were affected by the stereotypes of the time, reflecting the battles between the settlers and indigenous tribes, who were defending their territory.

Although most children never met any actual indigenous people, the descendants of the original settlers were surrounded by memories of the communities they had displaced: Connecticut: Land on the Long Tidal River; Massachusetts: named after the Massachusetts' tribe; even Canada is an indigenous name, meaning "village". And using the name Columbus had mistakenly given American native inhabitants, when he thought he had reached India, many locales were given names reflecting the previous inhabitants, such as Indian

Harbour, Indian Point, Indian Lake, and of course, Indiana.

Because they could survive in the wilderness, and had extensive knowledge of the natural world, the way of life of the indigenous people was often admired by non-indigenous people and used as a model, especially for children's activities.

In the United States, the adults are often involved in imaginary roles along with the children – something we rarely find in Ransome's books – although Captain Flint plays his role quite well, as does Mrs. Walker as Queen Elizabeth 1st. In *Secret Water* the whole Walker family plan to explore and map the Walton Backwaters, but the First Lord of the Admiralty puts an end to that by ordering Commander Walker to London, in preparation for starting work at once at the Shotley Naval Station. A quick decision provides for the Swallows to go camping on their own, after being dropped off by their parents on Horsey Island (Swallow Island).



Log cabin on Ram Island, c. 2018



Ernest Thompson Seton painting the Thunderbird, c. 1927

In my mother's family, the parents, children and friends played that they were an indigenous tribe, and they helped form an organization called the Woodcraft League.

Here is how it started: Writer Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946) had emigrated from England to Canada as a child, with his family. In Canada he spent much time in the wilds, meeting First Nations people, learning about nature and living rough. He became an artist-naturalist and official naturalist of Manitoba. Seton studied animals in the wild – both small ones like squirrels and rabbits and large ones like wolves, bears, coyotes and caribou. After moving to the New York area he succeeded in publishing a series of books such as *Wild Animals I Have Known* and *Lives of the Hunted*, the income from which supported his research, sketching and writing. In

1901, Seton started a youth group based on the culture of the indigenous peoples of North America, and focused on the study of wild animals, plants and nature. Through the woman suffragist movement, my grandmother met Mrs. Grace Seton, and her husband Ernest (who was a supporter of woman suffrage), and soon my grandmother, grandfather and their five children were involved in the Woodcraft League.

Local groups formed “tribes” and took indigenous names. Ernest Seton was “Black Wolf” and his signature a wolf track. My mother was Pah-lee-oh or “Dawn Maiden”; her brother Bill was “Shingebis” – the Loon or Great Northern Diver. (Bill was a strong accomplished swimmer and diver.) Seton wrote a *Woodcraft Manual*, detailing activities the tribe could do. These were based on nature study – learning to identify trees, flowers, and living things – and on First Nations culture – woodcraft, the making of clothing and native shelters, and native songs, legends, and art. Outdoor athletics such as swimming and canoeing and archery were an integral part of woodcraft life.

A high point of the long summer vacation, which in North America goes from June to the end of August, was a camping excursion to Ram Island, our family island off the coast of Maine. Here the family lived in log cabins and tents, learned to canoe, row and sail, identified seashells and sea birds, and cooked over a campfire. Following instructions in Seton's *Manual*, the children fashioned bows from the cedar branches, and arrows from pine, and practiced target shooting. Large logs were rolled into a circle to form



Maida and her brother David re-painting the Thunderbird, c. 1939

benches in a Council Ring, and each person painted a totem for themselves mounted on a staff, to stand for their First Nations name.

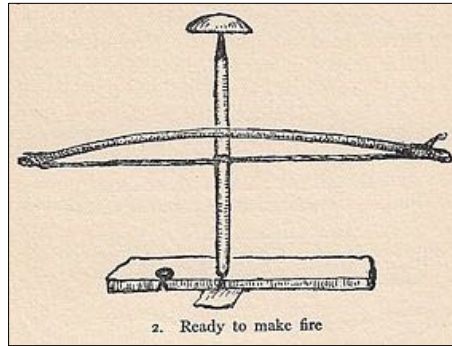
Ernest Seton, when he visited, built a chief's seat at the head of the circle, with a large Thunderbird of wood built above it. Before the summer ended, a Grand Council was held and each member of the group reported on what they had learned and done during the camp period: identified 25 birds, made a shell collection, made a feather head-dress, climbed a local mountain. Each completed activity earned a “coup” marked by a special cloth symbol which the child sewed onto their Indian costume.

My mother and her three brothers and sister spent many summers as Woodcrafters, learning about nature and about the culture of the indigenous

peoples. And being outdoors most of the time, they became accustomed to climbing over rocks, hiking trails, swimming in cold sea water, and handling canoes and other craft.

This family tradition was carried on after my mother had a family of her own. My father joined in and all one winter he sewed a canvas tepee, using his Navy skills with a sailor's needle to fashion the canvas into a conical tent. In spring we cut poles and raised it in the back yard, where my brothers and I could sleep out and live close to "mother earth" and fresh air.

My mother taught me how to make rubbing sticks to start a fire without matches. We went out to the woods together, and she showed me the kind of spruce tree with strong curved branches to make the "bow" of the rubbing sticks. On the bow was fastened a string of rawhide. A straight peg about 10 inches long and sharpened at one end became a drill, and a "hearth" of a flat chip of wood made up the kit. Oh, I mustn't leave out a small curved piece of wood to hold the drill. To make a fire, you wind the



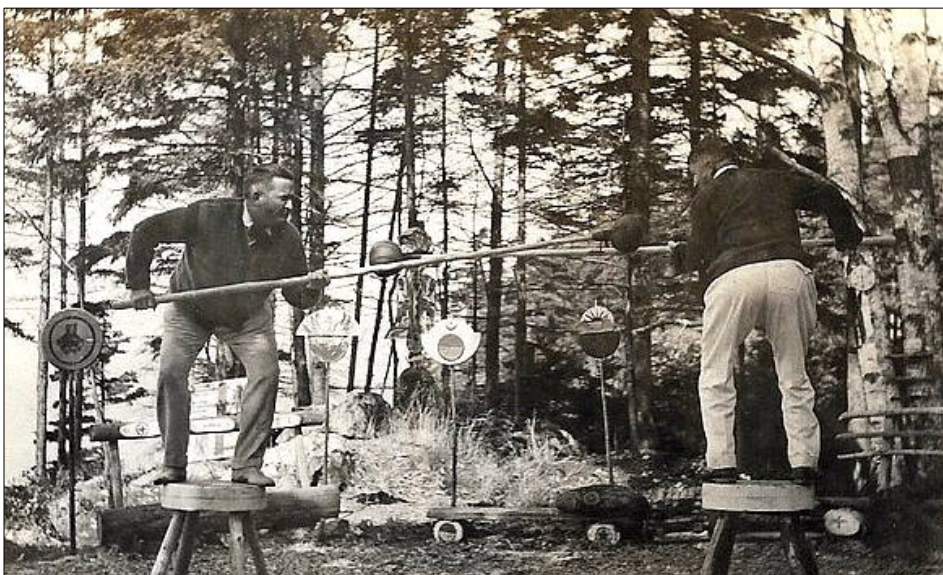
rawhide string once around the drill. Put the point of the drill on the hearth, and saw back and forth with the bow, like sawing wood, to make the drill twirl on the hearth. As you do this, you create friction and heat on the wooden hearth.

Soon smoke will come out; you saw harder and faster and when you have a glowing coal, you tip the coal out onto your prepared tinder - this can be dry, dead grass, or, best of all a mouse's nest. The glowing coal should light it, and from the tinder you light your prepared kindling wood. I remember the great satisfaction the I felt when finally, after all this effort, a puff of smoke and a small flame appeared!

Nature was all around us on Ram Island. One summer I completed a scrapbook of mounted wildflowers which bloomed in a series from late spring with the hepatica to the fall asters. We enjoyed watching the seals sunning on the Island's rocks, and were astonished at the bald eagles who built a huge nest on our Island. We listened in the evening around our campfire to the mystical call of the



The tepee my father made



The Uncles, tub-tilting, c. 1912

loons (Shingebis or the Great Northern Diver) as they fished on the incoming tide.

The loons were not the only ones who fished. My brother from our floating dock got a pull on his fishing line, and pulled up a yard-long fierce grey fish which thrashed around on the float, while I cried, "A shark! a shark!" It was indeed a shark, the smallest of the shark family, a dog fish! I can't remember now whether we ate it or let it go, but it had vicious sharp teeth in its mouth. Other catches were flounders and cunners.

We all learned camp games such as tub-tilting – using long spears with a soft head of stuffed burlap to try to push each other off a barrel or log. A nature scavenger hunt, with a list of objects to find, challenged our natural history knowledge. The list might include, a fern leaf, a sea urchin shell, a bird feather, a mountain ash berry. My brother and I carried on the Woodcraft tradition by repainting Seton's Thunderbird in the Council Ring.

Even though we took Indian names and costumes, I had not met a truly indigenous person at that time. But a few years later my mother rented a

cottage to a family of Mohawks from up-state New York. They were very friendly, and although the adults only spoke Mohawk, the four children who attended public school translated! I was invited to go along with this family when they attended their annual pow-wow, which took place on Long Island, New York.

What a wonderful experience! Seeing the actual customs, dances and songs of the real indigenous people! Since then I have met many original North Americans, including people from the Mi'kmaq, Cree and Navajo first nations, and learned to appreciate that

wherever they work – in the military, in construction trades, as artisans and teachers – they prize their unique culture and traditions.

Playing games of the imagination, whether the roles are Explorers, Pirates, or First Nations peoples, allows children to broaden their horizons, and learn about other customs. And camping, boating and being in the outdoors fosters a love of the wild world, and lifelong skills to enjoy the sea, the woods, and the natural miracles around us.

My Discovery of Arthur Ransome

By Audrie (Baldwin) Cossar (Kingston, Ontario)

When I was eight or so, my father finally fulfilled a long-held dream: he bought a boat. It was just a 20' motor cruiser that slept two, far from new, but still sturdy and safe for Ontario's Lake Simcoe. He had always been fascinated by boats, but his only previous craft was a cedar-strip runabout with a small outboard motor. He was delighted to have a real boat at last. So was I, for he then built a small dinghy in which I was allowed to row around the harbour. Later my desire to sail in a real sailboat was satisfied by a friend across the lake.

But a two-berth boat was a challenge for a family of three. Being so young and small, however, I was able to sleep on the stern bench. That worked for nearly five years, at which point we moved up to a larger boat, which became our family craft until after I was married.

I was a voracious reader from pre-school days. Any and every topic was

of interest. For those months of the year that I spent in school I relied on books to take me on adventures. My fourth-grade classroom had a small selection of books in a cupboard beside the teacher's desk. Here I found something that just might suit me about life with the new boat.

It was called *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*. I was enthralled! It was the first Ransome book that I had ever seen and I wanted more. I found some in our town's public library, but soon wanted my own copies. I don't remember how long it took to get them all, but through birthday and Christmas presents I eventually had the full set. I was in high school by the time the last one was published.

I loved those stories! I lived those sto-



Lake Simcoe

ries in my imagination. When I bicycled to school I was sailing my little boat along a canal or river. My sailing friend was also fond of Swallows and Amazons. Other friends joined me in playing out the events in the books. We can still make passing references that we all understand. I re-read the whole collection at least every other year. Eventually I read and re-read them to my children, who equally enjoyed them. My second son in particular loves them as much as I do and is a member of TARS. He read them to

his children and now reads them to his grandchildren. His previous sailboat was named *Goblin*; his newest one is *Sea Bear*.

In the early 90s my husband and I were in the Lake District. We visited Ransome's grave at Rusland and the museum in Kendall. There we found

out about a new organization called TARS. I promptly joined up and started to collect everything I could about Ransome and these wonderful stories.

Since then I have been able to attend an Annual Meeting (2000) and a Literary Weekend (2013). In 1996 I also

attended another group's S&A week at Coniston.

I have just observed my 84th birthday and am still as enthusiastic as I was when I first put hands on WDMT-GTS.

Thank you, Arthur Ransome!

Churchill, Ransome, and Me

By Paul Nelson (New Orleans)

Here is a question: what do the great Winston Churchill, our wonderful Arthur Ransome and me have in common? After all, I am just one of the great unwashed masses. Two clues: first, Churchill was once the First Lord of the Admiralty, which has a lot to do with boats. Second, I think most all of the S&A books have a boat as part of the story. The connection?

Of course, BOATS. Keep reading.

1950 was a great year for us Nelsons. In January we were blessed by a little baby girl, followed by a new Buick Special, and in the spring a 33-foot Owens power boat. The girl we still have, the Buick lasted 10 years (think Ransome's Rattle-trap), but the Owens was gone in two years as my dad got the sailing bug. The year was now 1952 and I was 10 years old.

So even without the internet or the Texas Sailing forum, Dad found a 30-foot, all-steel sloop located in St. Pete, Florida. So, Dad, brother Craig, and I loaded up the Buick (the front bumper alone weighed more than my current Honda sub-compact). After two days, one cheap hotel night, and 70 gallons of gas we arrived at the shipyard... our coming week's project.



Craig and I were assured that sanding, painting, and sweating were going to be fun... I guess so. After a week, we and the boat were done... done (yet, a lot quicker than when Ransome had Racundra built). I suspect that between the lead paint and other assorted carcinogens my IQ may have dropped a few points, but the good news is that I have never had a barnacle grow on me, and the boat looked wonderful.

The day before casting off for New Orleans, Dad hired a salty-looking old character (think Ransome's crew, the Ancient Mariner) to teach us the finer points of sailing, but mainly to get us home safely. Additionally, we needed one more safety item. We had noticed all these small people sailing around the Tampa/St. Pete harbor in what they called Prams. Of course we had

to have a lifeboat, so our \$35 pram was strapped to the cabin top and we were finally heading west (think of the skiff that Ransome had made by the coffin carpenters).

This little pram was all of seven feet, had a daggerboard, a few wood sticks to hold up the 10 sq feet of sail, and at no extra charge an endless supply of fresh lake water in the "bilge".

And all this was GREAT!

Every Saturday the little pram was fully rigged and I, as captain, headed out to the wilds of the outer and inner harbors. Of course there was always a bit of racing with the "other" small people boats, the Penguins. Actually, not much of a race as they were much faster, until with a bit of wood (a broken broom handle) some 6 feet of fine 1/8 inch manila line, and a triangle made of an old sheet I was almost able to keep up with the Penguins... thanks to my new JIB!

Where is the little Pram? The first of what we now call Optimists? She is still with me, stored behind some gray matter along with all the other fond memories of my youth: first boat, first bike, first car, first girlfriend, and, of course, first kiss.

Kanchenjunga's Cairn — Places we've been and our adventures

A Road and River Odyssey

Vancouver to the Yukon Territory and points in between

By Jill Blair (Vancouver, B.C.)

Early August 2013 found myself and my old school friend from Australia on the road north. The car was packed with camping gear and whatever else we would need for a six-week trip. Our initial destination was Whitehorse, capital of the Yukon, where we were to leave the car during our 11-day rafting trip on the Tatshenshini/Alsek rivers.

We had allowed three days to drive through British Columbia to Whitehorse, camping enroute. It was magical, particularly while heading north on highway 37, also known as the Stewart Cassiar highway.

Arriving in Whitehorse we had time to wander around the town and along the river looking at the whispering aspens. It was as though the trees were talking to us. We then met our trip leaders and the other seven guests, all of whom were from the U.S. and who



were to be our paddling companions on the rafting expedition.

The Tatshenshini/Alsek Park actually crosses the borders between the Yukon, British Columbia and Alaska. We launched around lunch time, heading southwest on the Tatshenshini River. We were totally pampered on

the trip as all our meals were prepared for us. We did have our cleanup duties to perform each night though.

The river at that time of the year was mostly class 1 and class 2*, which made for easy paddling, especially with our skillful guides steering from the stern of each boat.

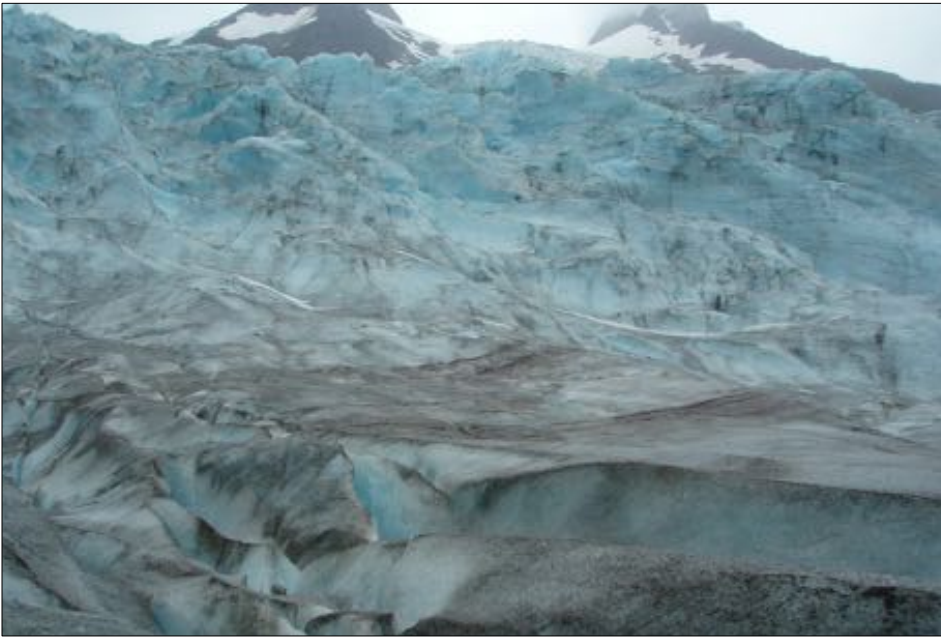
The scenery in this corner of the Yukon and into B.C. is spectacular. On many afternoons we had time to stop early for a hike up into the hills or onto the glaciers which empty into the river. We did see a grizzly bear and beavers but not a lot of other wildlife. There was plenty of bear scat around so perhaps we were lucky.

The highlight of the trip came when

*The international scale of river difficulty says that a class 1 river is "Easy", while a class 2 is "Novice"; see Wikipedia for details:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_scale_of_river_difficulty





we reached Alsek Lake. We paddled among icebergs which littered the lake and were able to capture many beautiful photos. We had intended to have lunch and then paddle out the west end of the lake into the Alsek river for the last leg of our journey to Dry Bay, approximately 40 km downriver.

However nature intervened and we were forced to break the ice with our paddles for about three hours, creating a path through only to have it close up behind us. The ice got thicker, the day advanced and we were really no closer to our goal.

The decision was made to go back to where we had lunch and camp. Our leader had done this trip many times and had never encountered these con-

ditions. Big decisions needed to be reached. My girlfriend and I were the only ones who were totally flexible with our time and were prepared to

wait it out for the ice to clear in a day or two (or three). We had enough food to last but our paddling companions needed to get back to Whitehorse in order to catch flights home and our leaders had one more trip to do that season. Fortunately we had a Sat phone for emergencies. In no time a helicopter was arranged for the following day to fly us over the ice jam and down to the forestry landing strip at Dry Bay where we were to meet our Air North charter plane for the 1 1/2 hour flight back to Whitehorse.

What a trip! Stayed tuned for Part 2 of “A Road and River Odyssey” as we explore the Yukon Territory, the Inland Passage by ferry, and horseback riding and canoeing in the Cariboo region of B.C.



Useful Links

The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) website: <http://arthur-ransome.org>

All Things Ransome, a website devoted to keeping articles, artwork, and anything related to Ransome:
<http://www.allthingsransome.net>

The Arthur Ransome Wiki, an encyclopedia on Ransome, his life and works:
http://arthur-ransome.wikia.com/wiki/Arthur_Ransome_Wiki

Dot's Latest Story — Your S&A-inspired writing

Dot and Dick in California

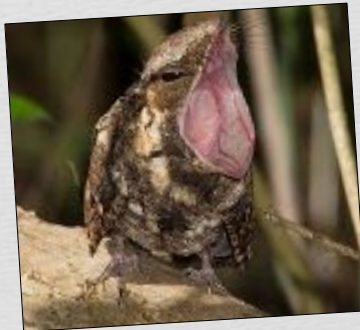
“Edited” by Molly McGinnis (Manteca, California)

Dear Tom.

My friends in the biology department took me with them on the big Easter break field trip to the ocean. Dr. Cogswell and Dr. Haven were the leaders. We camped in a big state park near the water and as we came in after a big day of tidepooling and snorkeling and seabirds - more about that later - Dr. Haven slammed on the brakes, yanked our Travelall over to the shoulder, leapt out, grabbed a lump off the road, and came back holding the strangest bird in his hands. I don't know how Dr. Haven ever saw it, it was the same color as the tarmac. Dr. Haven said they come out at dusk and sit on the dark road surface to warm up. We all crowded round the headlights to look at it. It's called a Nighthawk and it had the tiniest little head and almost no beak at all.



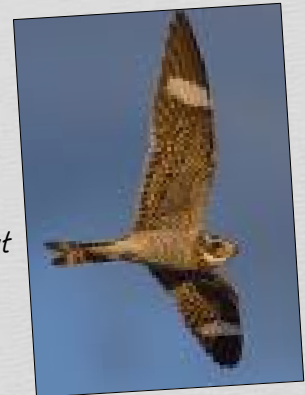
Dr. Haven turned the Nighthawk to show us the bristles around its beak and well.



here's a photo. (I didn't take it, it's one of Dr. Cogswell's.) They're insectivores: eat only insects and vacuum in the insects by snapping their big mouths open! The bristles are extra stiff and long, to keep the bugs out of their eyes. After we all looked at it, Dr. Haven put it down off the road and it just disappeared. They're so sure they're invisible they don't even bother to build a nest.

I couldn't understand why it's called a Night "hawk" even though it isn't a hawk, but Dr. Haven gave me a photo.

After we got home Dr. Cogswell took me to the University museum and showed me some more insectivores from the collection. He explained that almost all the insectivores have bristles around their beaks but that none were so big as the Nighthawks' and the Poor Wills' (close relatives). Poor Wills aren't common around here but Dr. Cogswell said that whippoorwills are common East of the Mississippi. I hope Da will do that summer seminar so I'll have a chance to hear the "Whip-poor-will" call. Phoebe's have bristles, too, only much shorter. I hope I can get a close look at ours now I have binoculars to use. It's flying out from the lamp post to catch flies, well, insects all day long now. I wonder if there are babies to feed already.



We only saw a nest in the Broads - remember that?

I better tell you about the diving part later or this will cost too much to airmail.

Dick.

Dear Tom (again),

Now, about the rest of the shore trip. We came back chilled from the long day on and in the water. I was glad I had Karen's parka!

The professors said that this was a great time to go, because only a few weeks later the cold current that comes along the coast in the winter trades places with a warmer one and then the seaweeds start to disintegrate, and the animals move or die because they all depend on the plants. Some eat plants, some eat animals that eat the plants, and so on up the food chain. I waded around and played with anemones and floated with a mask and snorkel for a bit but the Pacific is cold! Anemones squirt and close up if you stick



a finger into the middle, and if I was a little fish I'd be closed in and digested. After a while my finger felt funny, was the anemone trying to digest it?



Some of the students had wetsuits and brought in things from deeper down for us to look at, like this starfish. Dr. Haven has an underwater case for his camera! But most of the pictures came out kind of fuzzy.

The divers got abalone and fishes too, and after we keyed everything out for our field log we had a big seafood dinner. Abalone are a kind of snail only huge, and flat. They have to be

at least seven inches long to be legal so the divers take a special tool down with them, to pry the "abs" off the rocks and measure them.



Here's what abalone look like under water.

And being cleaned.

The muscle that the abs hold onto the rocks with are what you eat. I helped fix



them. We took them out of the shells and cut off all the brown skin and black parts (I got to do that) and guts (there aren't many) and cut them in strips and pounded the strips and cooked them on the coals. They were really good! So were the fish.

I never got a very good picture of all the seaweeds. The colors are astonishing!

We all looked for nighthawks on the way home, but we didn't see any.

Don't forget to write! Dick.

Beckfoot Kitchen — Eating with the Swallows and Amazons

(or is it more of *Dot's Latest Story?*)

Dick's First Catch

“Edited” by Molly McGinnis (Manteca, California)



Dick's catch. Bluegill have many names: perch, sunfish, bream (or brim) are just a few. Their close relatives, pumpkinseed and crappie, are called by these names sometimes too.

Worms are good bait for all the little panfish but Dick's bluegills were part of the catch in this seine. The bottom of the seine is weighted with pieces of lead and the students slowly pull it in to shouts of “Keep the leadline down! Keep the leadline down!” from the professor (red cap).



Dorothea writes:

Dear Susan,

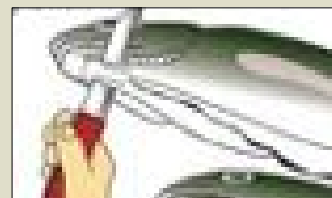
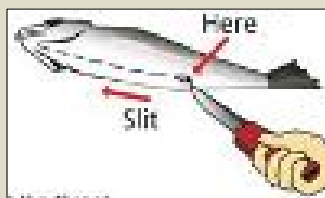
Dick went fishing! Well, not exactly. He went on an ichthyology field trip and came back with a lot of bluegills all cleaned and scaled except one, so he could show me how to scale and clean it. Butter to get the scales off really is messy, and butter's so dear when you have to buy it! I asked Karen next door and she said we cooked them just the right way for camp fish. Also that the way Jackie told me about, with breadcrumbs, was good too, but maybe I'd like to try the American way to pan-fry and she'd come over and show us how. Karen laughed when I said Jackie told us “Eat 'em as hot as you can lay your tongue to,” and said that was exactly right and she wished she could meet him sometime.

But first we had to clean and scale the 13th fish. Dick said “Baker's dozen, one over for luck.” He didn't say what kind of luck but it wasn't so bad really. He found a butter knife with tiny “serrations” on the edge and a big soup spoon with thin edges and we both worked on the fish. We laid it out flat on the big cutting board and he scaled one side and I did the other. You have to press the spoon (I liked the spoon best) firmly onto the fish and scrape up toward the head a little at a time. Dick used the knife and neither of us had scales flying all over like the time we tried to scale a fish in camp.

Maybe not having a good flat place to put the fish on in camp was part of the trouble?

Then we had to gut the fish. (I hate to think what the G.A. would say about that word!) Dick got it started. He took the pointy little paring knife and stuck it sharp edge out! just under the skin near the tail and slid the point up toward the head.

It looked very dangerous to me but he showed me that with the fish flat on its side he was cutting away from himself and there was less chance of breaking into the gut that way. Then he put the knife under the gills and cut that bit loose and pulled the insides away and cut them out with a bit of skin at the tail end. Like this.



I had to do the next bit but it was easy. I opened out the sides and scraped out the dark stuff from along the backbone with the spoon. Dick said that was kidney. Then I cut off the head right behind the gills. That was easy too because it was already half done.

Then Karen took a covered bowl, and lemons from her tree, and a smaller bag out of her big shopping

bag. The small bag had cornmeal in it – about a cup – shaken with salt and pepper. Then we put milk in a soup plate and layers of newspaper with more layers of paper towels on two dinner plates. Dick arranged another dinner plate and the soup plate to the left of the stove and put the plates with the towels to its right. (The scientific way, he said. Naturally.) I dipped three of the fish in the milk and shook them up with the cornmeal – gently – and put them on the plate to get a head start, so that the butter wouldn't burn while we coated the fish.

Karen liked the cast iron frying pans! She started the biggest one heating and put a lot of butter and oil in it – about as deep as my thumbnail only I didn't stick my thumb in to check! and Dick coated more fish while the butter and oil got hot. It kind of shimmered when it was hot but Karen tested it with the end of the wooden spoon handle too – a stream of tiny bubbles came out of the wood and that showed the fat was ready. We took the fish by the tail and laid them in the pan one at a time with a little in between so the fish could keep sizzling. It held about half the fish. We watched Karen turn the fish with the long spatula except she made us turn the last two. Karen's came out better. Some of the coating fell off ours.

When the fish were brown and crispy on both sides Karen lifted them out on the spatula (she held each fish over the pan for a bit to let the fat drip off) and put them on the paper towels and pressed more paper towels over the tops and Dick and I ate them right off the towels while Karen added more oil and

butter to the pan and coated the rest of the fish and started them frying. She says the cook doesn't get to eat until all the fish are done when you're pan frying so everyone else can eat theirs hot from the pan. She'd cut the lemons into wedges and we tried some with lemon. Dick liked his better without. And she put a sort of cabbage salad into small bowls for us to eat with the fish. Karen said it was cole slaw, and we thought it went very well with the fish. She gave us directions for making it.

When all the fish were eaten we all sat down and had blackberries from the freezer for dessert. Karen put the leftover milk and oil into the empty bowl the cole slaw came in and took it home for her dog, but we had to wash the dishes. Not so many really because we ate the fish off the plates they were drained on, but it took three goes with the dishcloth to get the oil and cornmeal off the counters and stovetop! Dick said we should put newspaper over the counters next time.

PS: The oil was to keep the butter from burning. It was sunflower oil but Karen said any kind would do as long as it tasted good. (When you melt American butter there's a lot of milky liquid in the bottom – that's what burns. Mary at Swainson's said she had to wash and wash and paddle and paddle the butter so her butter would be the best on the Lake – that time when I saw her smacking our lump of butter with wooden paddles to finish it.)

PPS: The students in Da's class were taking him to dinner afterward so we didn't have to worry about leaving any fish for him.

Are You on Facebook?

Despite the many problems with Facebook, it does enable groups of like-minded people to share and exchange. (These are the groups I can find. Let me know if you find any others — Ed.)

The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) Facebook Group: www.facebook.com/groups/762560473886537/
(This is a closed group, so you will have to ask to join.)

Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons in North America: www.facebook.com/groups/tarsfriends/

The Arthur Ransome Society in New Zealand & Australia: www.facebook.com/tarsnz/

The Arthur Ransome Group: www.facebook.com/groups/2612950856/

More Beckfoot Kitchen

Cole Slaw (Not Dick's Notes)

By Molly McGinnis (Manteca, California)

Nothing is easier if you start with a pre-shredded bag from the supermarket – usually cabbage, a little red cabbage, a bit of carrot.

I slice my own. This batch took about half an hour including making the dressing, chunking the cabbages and peeling a carrot. No time at all to process – 2 mm slicer for the cabbages, coarse grater for the carrot. We like a bit of grated onion in the slaw, and you could add finely chopped celery, a sprinkle of celery seed, a few golden (or other) raisins, a bit of chopped green or red sweet pepper... or anything else you think will fit in (but not all in the same batch, please).

Make a dressing before slicing the



wasabi to a runny paste with water and let stand for a few minutes to develop the heat.

Dressing ingredients

- equal parts mayonnaise & yoghurt
- small spoonful of sugar
- bit of salt
- pepper
- vinegar to thin



slaw. Coleslaw dressings are usually creamy and slightly sweet. I made my favorite – and don't be frightened by the exotic ingredients! It's what I found on my shelves, and my "improvement" on the classic which is just a couple spoonfuls of mayonnaise thinned with juice from bread and butter pickles. (No pickle juice left – had to make do with vinegar and sugar.) To add a bit of bite, mix a half teaspoon of dry mustard or powdered

Beat with a fork, taste with a bit of cabbage leaf, adjust seasonings, and if possible let stand to blend flavors.



Leftover dressing keeps for some days, refrigerated.

It's easier to coat the slaw in stages. Put a couple inches of veg into a large bowl, add a spoonful of dressing, mix lightly, and repeat. Toss the whole thing together and chill. Cole slaw is better if it can stand a few hours or overnight before serving, and any left over will keep for 3 or 4 days in the fridge.

Iceberg lettuce wedges or sliced or torn romaine hearts are good with the same dressings, especially with garlic added. And there's always that other Midwestern classic, lettuce with nothing but vinegar and sugar:

- two parts mild vinegar (rice or balsamic)
- one part sugar
- pinch salt

White or cider vinegar should be cut with water, about 4 parts vinegar to one of water. Add a few drops of Chinese toasted sesame oil for an Asian touch. Would balsamic or wine vinegar be called the California or Quebecois way?

Grandma's slaw board, brightened up with lemon and peel and a real pain to use now that it's so wobbly and rusty.



Pieces of Eight — The Junior Pages



A Puzzling Situation

by Martha Blue

We all know that during the misfortunes of the Coots (mostly the Death and Glories) some shackles were stolen from Sonning's boatsheds by George Owden. But they have now been stolen again!

Back at Beckfoot Nancy is under quarantine, yet again, and has been given the task of finding the culprit before the blame is again bestowed upon the Coots and Tom Dudgeon, or even Dick and Dorothea!

Unfortunately, Captain Flint and Timothy ("Squashy Hat") are also mixed up in this, as they have gone to the Broads on a wild-goose-chase hunting for gold! They also are sus-

pects and Nancy must clear their names before it is too late!

The D's and the Coots have gathered some clues for her and she now has to use what she has got to find the culprit. They have chased the criminal down to a particular street and on it live PC Tedder, Mrs Barrable, George Owden, Captain Flint and Timothy, Great Aunt Maria (surprisingly!), Dr Dudgeon and Jim Woodall.

You must discover where each person lives, from #1 to #7, how each house has a different number of rooms, a different number of windows, and different coloured walls, and how each suspect owns a different part of a boat, has a different type of transport, and a different pet! Watch out for red herrings!

The only person without a boat part is the criminal!

Here are the clues that they gathered for Nancy:

1. Dr Dudgeon now has a pet cat.
2. Aunt Maria has 12 windows in her house.
3. George Owden lives in house number 6.
4. PC Tedder lives next to George Owden and has only one neighbour.
5. PC Tedder has a pet white rat.
6. The person with ten windows lives next to Aunt Maria.
7. Dr Dudgeon lives at house number 1.
8. The parrot belongs to the owner of the horse and cart.
9. Jim Woodall has become good friends with his next-door-but-one neighbours Captain Flint and Timothy who live at number 3.
10. Timothy and Captain Flint have a spare centreboard just in case!
11. The Model T. Ford is owned by the person with green walls.

12. Mrs Barrable lives next to the person with a cat.
13. Jim is not as keen on his other neighbour, the lace-bedecked Great Aunt Maria who lives at house number 4.
14. Mrs Barrable has a horse and cart to get about, a little old-fashioned but adequate to her needs.
15. Captain Flint missed Polly too much so he bought himself a budgie.
16. The person with green walls has 8 windows.
17. Mrs Barrable has 6 windows and her neighbour has 12 windows.

18. George Owden gets about on his red bike, quite cheerier than PC Tedder's black bike!



19. Aunt Maria loves her pet goldfish so well she cannot get about without him!
20. Aunt Maria uses a spar sail as a cover for her car Rattletrap!
21. George Owden has attached his (PET!) brass golden bream onto an old mast!
22. Doctor Dudgeon's rowlocks are good picture-frame stands!
23. Jim Woodall lives at number 5!
24. Jim Woodall has an arty & crafty streak and has used some battered oars as bannisters for his stairs!



25. Out of all of the houses, the person with most taste is house number 4 with their fabulous mustard walls!



26. Lucky pet pug dog Violet lives in the turquoise-walled house.

27. The neighbour of George Owden has turquoise walls.

28. PC Tedder's light blue walls are a stark contrast to the Dr's green walls.

29. The horse is not the only occupant of House number 2; they also have a pet parrot as well!

30. The owner of the ten-roomed house lives next to Great Aunt Maria.

31. Captain Flint's labs and studies take up most of his and Timothy's 8-roomed house!

32. Great Aunt Maria's 12 gold-rimmed windows really impress the neighbourhood!

33. Mrs Barrable prefers plain old white for the colour of her walls.

34. The budgie has 10 windows through which he can see his neighbour, Mrs Barrable's parrot.

35. The person with the golden bream is sometimes found cycling a red bike.

36. George Owden likes dark walls.

37. Jim Woodall's neighbour has dark blue walls.

38. Aunt Maria's mustard walls contrast sharply to the grey walls of her neighbours, Mr Steading and Captain Flint.

39. Captain Flint and Timothy live next to the person with a 5-roomed house.

40. Aunt Maria's house has 1 room less than Jim and Tim.

41. The house with grey walls is next to the house with white walls.

42. The neighbour of the six-windowed house has 9 rooms.

43. Great Aunt Maria has 3 windows fewer than her neighbour at no. 5.

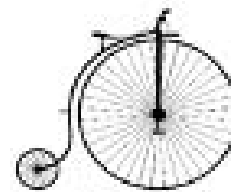
44. George Owden's neighbour has 2 fewer rooms than he does, and the other neighbour has one more than

George does.

45. The person with turquoise walls has a room more than George.

46. George has 1 room more than Captain Flint and Mr Steading.

47. Great Aunt Maria's nephew's friend and her nephew share a battered and truly ancient black bike to



transport them to likely auriferous locations. (A.K.A. A Penny Farthing!)

48. Jim Woodall has 3 windows more than Great Aunt Maria, 4 windows more than George Owden and 6 windows more than PC Tedder.

49. Jim Woodall not only has Sir Garnet to get about on, but also a new silver bike!

50. The DR has the same number of windows as the GA!

52. Mrs Barrable has used her antique halyards to hang up her paintings in her drawing room!

This grid may help you find the answer:

Suspect	House number	Number of rooms	Number of windows	Wall colour	Boat part	Type of transport	Pet
PC Tedder							
Mrs Barrable							
George Owden							
Captain Flint & Timothy							
Great Aunt Maria (!)							
Dr Dudgeon							
Jim Woodall							

Strike of the Shark, by Bear Grylls

A review by Aurora B. E. Blue

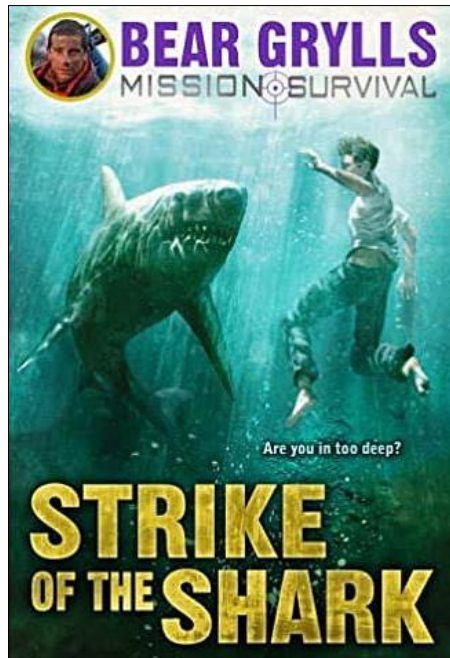
*Your ship is sinking.
You are miles from land.
No one is coming to rescue you,
and the sharks are circling...*

Beck Granger is overloaded with media.

Steven Holbrook offers Beck a 10-day lecturing job to get away from everything, but Beck never imagined that they would cruise across the middle of the Bermuda triangle, or that the electrics on the bridge would break, and that Beck would find himself in charge of a tricky situation. He now has to look after four people, one of whom is seriously injured...

Will Beck be able to survive and keep others alive on a fast-sinking ship, with only biscuits, a bottle of water, sea-sickness tablets, and two flares? And the sharks are circling!

I found this book gripping but with a twist of sadness...



Bear Grylls is one of the world's most well-known adventurers. He was the youngest person to climb Mount Everest, after breaking his back in three places only 18 months earlier! After spending three years in the British Forces with 21 SAS he set off to explore the globe in search of even bigger challenges. He has climbed

Mount Everest, crossed the Arctic in a small boat and has explored deserts, jungles and swamps worldwide. His TV shows have been seen by more than 1.2 billion viewers over 150 countries!

Bear Grylls has written a lot of books for a variety of ages: young children, older children, teenagers and adults.

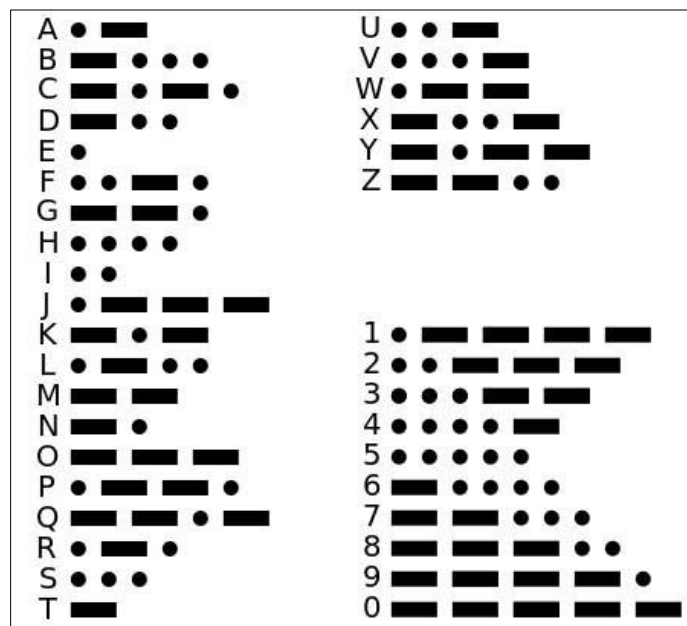
These are some his books about Beck Granger:

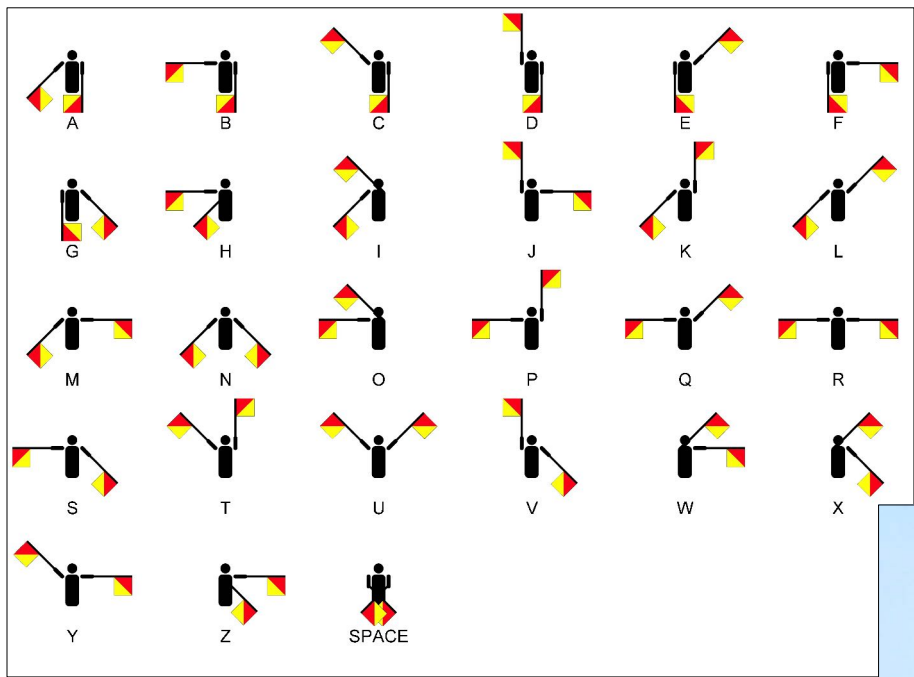
- Strike of the Shark*
- Claws of the Crocodile*
- Tracks of the Tiger*
- Way of the Wolf*
- Rage of the Rhino*
- Sands of the Scorpion*
- Gold of the Gods.*

In 2009, Bear became Chief Scout to the Scouting Association. He lives in London on a barge and in Wales on a small island with his wife, Shara, and their three sons, Jesse, Marmaduke and Huckleberry.

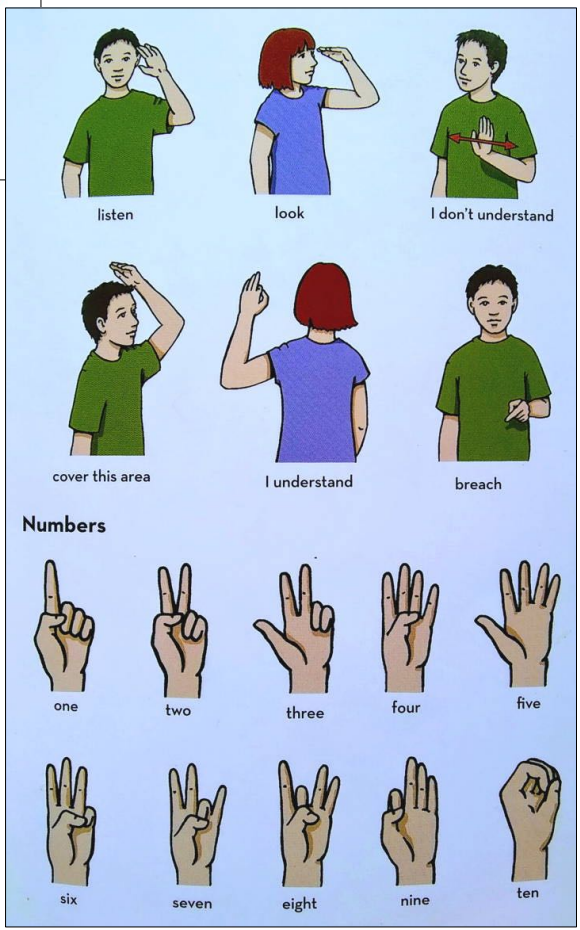
With all this 'quarantine' going on, perhaps we could all show our neighbours how to send messages in semaphore, or by other methods of signalling, so that then we could send messages whilst 'keeping our social distance'?

This is Morse Code





Here is a Semaphore chart:
remember *Winter Holiday?*



These hand signals come from Bear Gryll's
Survival Skills Handbook - Signalling

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